GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:527
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2013
NEW LABOUR POLICY OF SAUDI ARABIA
Annayyagari Shri Sai Prathap;Antony Shri Anto;Karunakaran Shri P.;Reddy Shri Anantha Venkatarami;Semmalai Shri S. ;Tagore Shri Manicka;Thomas Shri P. T.

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the introduction of Nitaqat policy has adversely affected Indians working in Gulf countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of Indians returned from Gulf countries on account of the changes in labour laws;

(d) the number of Indians issued Emergency Certificates to return to India and the number still waiting to get ECs;

(e) whether the Government has formulated any rehabilitation programme for the expatriates; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) & (b): As the grace period for implementation of the Nitaqat policy has been extended twice,(first to 3rd July 2013 and then to 3rd November 2013) the policy has not had any significant adverse impact on Indian workers in Saudi Arabia except on those who were working there without valid papers. The grace period allows even workers without valid papers to have their status regularized.

(c) & (d): 3428 persons had been issued Emergency Certificates(ECs) by the Indian Missions in United Arab Emirates when Amnesty had been proclaimed from December 2012 to February 2013. 7923 Indians left United Arab Emirates (UAE) during the Amnesty period.

Subsequent to the stricter enforcement in Saudi Arabia, the Embassy of India and its Consulate have so far issued over 68,500 Emergency Certificates (ECs) to enable affected Indian workers to come back to India. Information regarding how many of these have actually taken exit permits from the Saudi Arabian Government is released from time to time by the Saudi Arabian Government. Applications for ECs continued to be received as the Amnesty period has been extended upto 3rd November, 2013. Since the end of first Amnesty period, the Embassy of India and its Consulate have further issued over 1500 ECs.

(e) & (f): The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs had called meetings of Ministers/ representatives of major labour sending states twice, the first on 09.4.2013 and the second on 25.6.2013. The State Governments were requested to formulate rehabilitation programmes for returnees from the Gulf, using existing State and Central Government programmes where possible. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs had separately launched Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY) on a pilot basis to encourage and enable overseas Indian workers having Emigration Check Required (ECR) passports going to ECR countries, to (a) save for their return and resettlement, (b) save for their old age and (c) obtain a Life Insurance cover against natural death during the period of coverage.